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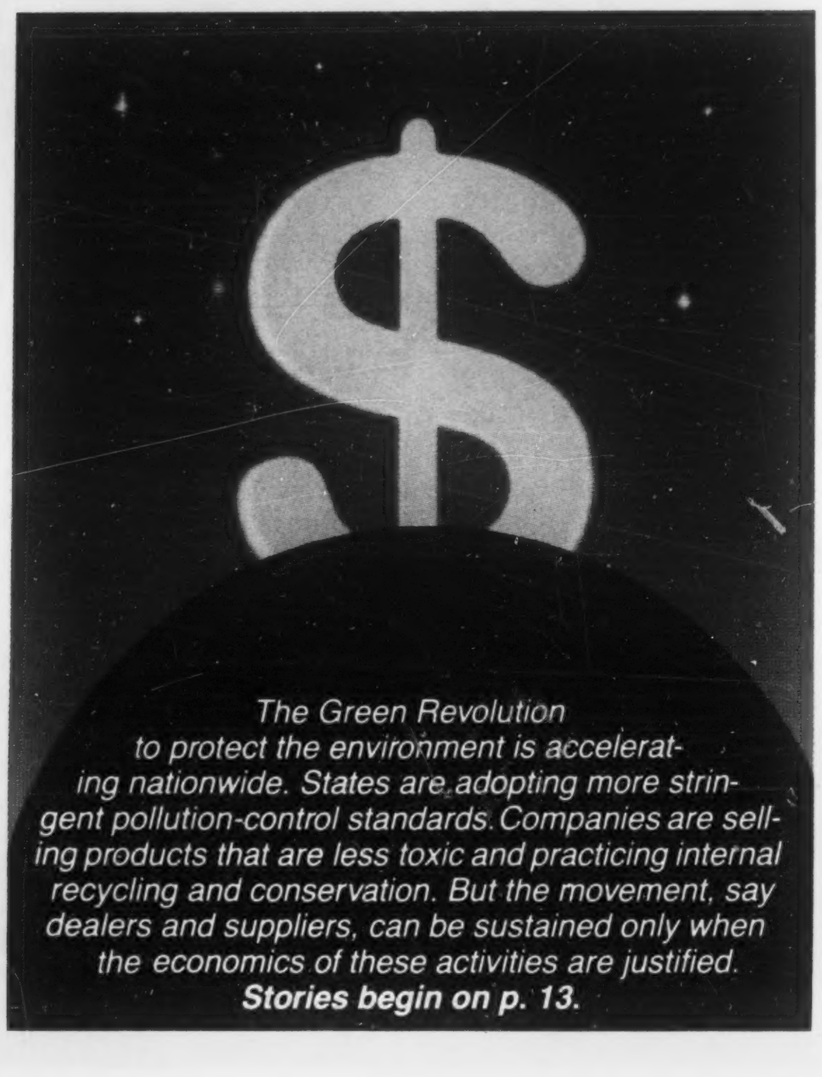
National Home Center News®

Vol. 17, No. 21 $5 a copy The Journal of News & Trends for Home Improvement Retailers, Co-ops & Wholesalers. Published by Lebhar-Friedman Inc. November 11, 1991

THE GREEN REVOLUTION



The Green Revolution to protect the environment is accelerating nationwide. States are adopting more stringent pollution-control standards. Companies are selling products that are less toxic and practicing internal recycling and conservation. But the movement, say dealers and suppliers, can be sustained only when the economics of these activities are justified.
Stories begin on p. 13.

Dealers finding Chicago 'burbs to be prime spot for new business

By Gary Ruderman

CHICAGO — A lack of competition, a glut of retail space and lower development costs are cited by developers and dealers as what's priming the pump for an onslaught of new home improvement and discount store retailers in Chicago's suburbs.

News Analysis

Not since K mart subsidiary Builders Square opened here in 1985 has Chicago's suburban market been so ripe for expansion. And, once again, K mart is making the news.

K mart officials confirmed that Builders Square would boost its store count here to 27 from 18 during the next 36 months. While no specific locations were disclosed, K mart's announcement comes on the heels of the opening of new Menard's stores this month in the suburbs of Naperville and Elgin, with six more to open in 1992. Menard's, based in Eau Claire, Wis., has long-range plans to have 50 stores in the Chicago area.

> The Windy City has become a very popular market into which many powerful chains will expand.

Next year, Waban subsidiary HomeClub will open seven stores and debut the California-based firm's new name.

The wild card in this expan-

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Chase-Pitkin gives local students extra incentive to finish school

By Robyn Taylor

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — When 15-year-old Mario Ramos first moved here from Puerto Rico five years ago, he couldn't speak a word of English. He struggled to get by in school, but he simply could not keep up with the rest of his class.

Marvin Parker, 16, also did poorly in school, but language wasn't his problem. Parker spent his junior high years mixed up in gangs and had no interest in attending class.

Now both boys say they are motivated students whose lives have changed, thanks to Wegman's Work-Scholarship Connection Program that includes weekend jobs at Chase-Pitkin Home Center on Highland Drive.

If it weren't for this program, Parker said he probably would have ended up on the streets and Ramos said his English may never have advanced so rapidly.

The program, started by the 44-unit Wegman's supermarket chain in 1987, provides part-time jobs at the supermarkets or Chase-Pitkin—a subsidiary of Wegman's—for students who may need special motivation to complete their high school education.

Each student in the program is given a school sponsor, who keeps abreast of what

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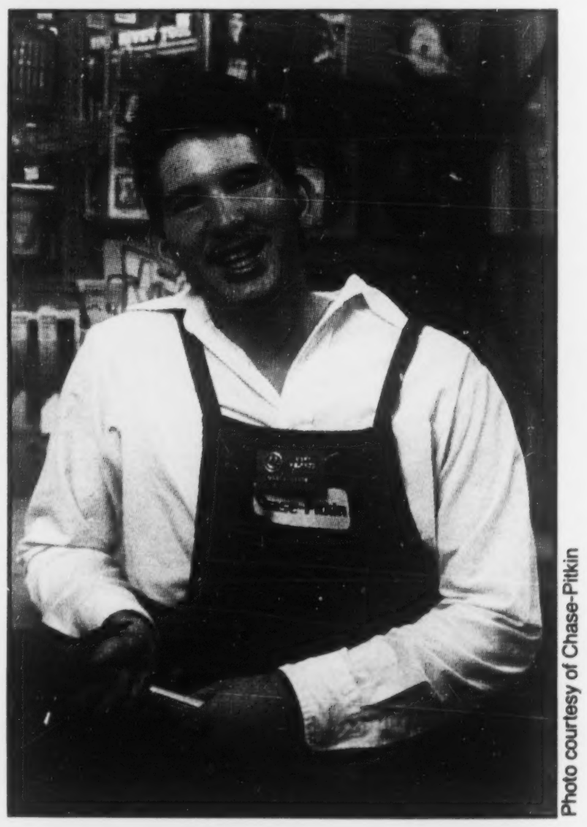

Photo courtesy of Chase-Pitkin

Mario Ramos works part time at Chase-Pitkin, in a program offered by its parent.

Wholesalers told their prices, costs aren't competitive

At recent NWHA show, Illinois manufacturer sounds warning

By John Caulfield

WASHINGTON — The president of a manufacturing company recognized for its strong support of distributors used a recent industry convention to warn wholesalers that their costs were not competitive with retailers', and that further industry consolidation may be their best hope for the future.

MasterBrand Industries (MBI), Deerfield, Ill., was awarded "Manufacturer of the Year" by the National Wholesale Hardware Association during its annual convention, held here Oct. 20 to 23.

MBI—the umbrella corporation that includes Moen, Chicago Specialty, Master Lock, Waterloo and Aristokraft—generates 60 percent of its $900 million in annual sales through two-step distribution.

Randy Larrimore, MBI's president, accepted the award

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Hancock Lumber names president from outside the family ranks

By Elizabeth Brent

CASCO, Maine — For the first time in its 132-year history, Hancock Lumber appointed a new president from outside its family owners.

Toby Hammond, who has spent 24 years with the company, became president and chief operating officer on Sept. 25, while David Hancock was promoted to chairman and ceo.

Hammond, 46, has already made his mark as executive vp, managing Hancock's sawmill and timberland divisions. The two mills produce 25 million board feet a year, and recently have been having banner production months by taking advantage of the shortages of lumber from the West Coast.

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SECOND CLASS

National Home Center News
Grand Central Station, P.O. Box 3118, New York, N.Y. 10164-0659

Green Cross comes under fire, page 3

THE GREEN REVOLUTION

. . . but not for a lack of 'eco-conscious' products

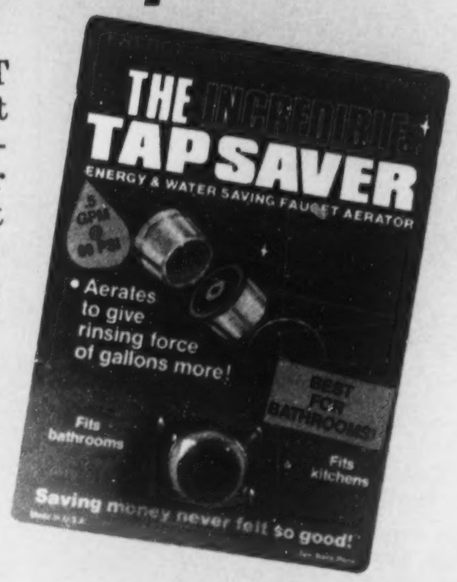
By an NHCN staff editor

NATIONAL REPORT — Finding products that claim to preserve the environment or conserve our natural resources is not that difficult these days.

The National Hardware Show this year featured 16 manufacturers whose titles included some variation of the words "biology," "environment," "green" and "organic."

In recent weeks, *NHCN* has received press releases describing environmentally friendly products from more than 80 manufacturers.

The following is a sampling of some of the more intriguing items, although this listing does not constitute confirmation of these products' claims by this publication. Retailers and distributors should consult with their suppliers as to the nature of these products and the validity of their environmental claims:


THE INCREDIBLE
TAP SAVER
ENERGY & WATER SAVING FAUCET AERATOR
• Aerates to give rinsing force of gallons more!
BEST FOR BATHROOMS!
Fits bathrooms
Fits kitchens
Saving money never felt so good!

Resources Conservation of Greenwich, Conn., offers the Incredible Tap Saver, which limits tap water.

Roebic's natural lawn and garden products help ease the burden on overflowing landfills.

• Pressure-treated wood has come under fire lately, as environmentalists charge that harmful chemicals can leak out of the wood and into the ground. But a company based in Charlotte, N.C., called **CSI Inc.**, is getting ready to release an alternative to chromated copper arsenic (CCA) pressure treatment of lumber.

The chemical, to be introduced next spring, is called ACQ (for ammoniacal copper quatinary). It reportedly uses no chromium or arsenic to treat the wood against termite attack and decay. The product is already in use in Scandinavia and Germany, where application of CCA has been banned, according to CSI vp-marketing Jim Saur;

• Timber and gypsum board have received the most attention in terms of new environmental products and programs. But there's been a raft of new introductions throughout all sectors of this category.

Monsey Products, Kimberton, Pa., makes a driveway sealer that reportedly meets or exceeds government regulations for controlling volatile emissions into the atmosphere.

Millwork companies are trying to start programs that replenish the forests. One such manufacturer is **Wing Industries**, which claims that some 7,000 customers so far in 1991 have taken the Dallas-based firm up on the invitation to have a tree planted for each Wing door that they buy;

• A host of lawn and garden products now make environmental claims. Among them is a liquid product by **Roebic Laboratories** of Orange, Conn., which acts as a composting and de-thatching catalyst on grass clippings and foliage. The active ingredient is a specially formulated bacteria that thrives on dead plant material.

Another area in L&G is fertilizers that use no toxic chemicals. **Harmony Products** offers slow-release lawn fertilizers that are said to combine organic poultry by-products with trace amounts of synthetic nutrients to give lawns, flowers

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Internal conserving is good for the Earth and, often, the bottom line

By John Caulfield

NATIONAL REPORT — Last summer, Riggs Supply, a retailer based in Kennett, Mo., lowered the ceilings in all eight of its units to between 15 and 21 feet from between 18 and 24 feet, to create a "brighter" environment and cut down on heating costs.

The lowered ceilings complemented the installation, a year earlier, of commercial ceiling fans that were connected to the store's air-conditioning thermostat and work in unison with its heaters suspended above. "I used to hear those heaters kicking in all the time," said company president Dolph Riggs III. "Now, not so much."

Environmentalism and cost savings have intersected, as more dealers than ever are looking inward to see where conservation and recycling programs can bring more dollars to the bottom line.

Riggs estimates that the expense of lowering the ceilings, which ran only around $2,500 per store because employees did the work, will be "totally recovered," through reductions in heating costs, within a "maximum" of three years.

The cost savings from recycling have been more modest, though most dealers feel their activities will eventually pay off, both from a conservation and a profit standpoint.

Driven by economics

Home improvement retailers admit that what their companies are doing for the environment is motivated primarily by economics. "We recycle when it makes business sense," said the chief executive for a large Midwest chain, who echoed sentiments expressed by several other dealers contacted for this article.

But many companies around the country are working quietly but aggressively to recycle waste from their offices, their stores, their sawmills, their warehouses and their factories.

They are educating their employees and, in some cases, their customers about recycling and saving energy. And in most cases, dealers are not looking for any publicity or marketing advantages.

One of the more elaborate campaigns on the environmental front has been waged for several years by Standard Brands Paint Co., the Torrance, Calif.-based specialty retailer and paint maker.

Over the decade the chain has collected and recycled more than 23 million pounds of cardboard from its DCs and factories; employees have recycled 1.3 million pounds of computer paper over the past five years; by shipping its paint in reusable trays, the company saves 2 million pounds of cardboard annually.

More significant has been the recycling done within the company's paint-making division, which used to dump more than 1,300 tons of waste per year into landfills.

In 1981 the company introduced what Craig Walker, its vp-communications, said was the industry's first "closed loop" to recapture liquid and solid waste produced when paint is made.

When 11,000-gallon paint storage vats are cleaned, the wash water and solid residue are run through a separating and recycling machine. The water is purified and reused for vat cleaning; resins and pigments are added to the solids to produce maintenance-grade paint that's sold or given away for municipal or industrial application.

Walker stated that Standard Brands now recycles 100 percent of this waste, and saves more than $500,000 annually in the process.

California has recognized the company's plant as a zero-waste producer, he said.

'Series of little things'

Others around the industry have taken smaller, though no less significant, steps to save money through recycling.

"Environmentalism is a series of little things," noted Peter Ganahl, president of Ganahl Lumber in Anaheim, Calif., which for the past few years has tried to keep waste from its three stores out of landfills.

All of those stores' wood waste now goes into what Ganahl calls a "hog," a machine that turns the wood into shaving chips that are resold to landscapers and horse barns. An on-premises crusher is used to recycle corrugated box waste. Another machine chops steel bands that bind lumber which is delivered to the store into 1- and 2-inch pieces that are sold to a steel recycling plant.

Ganahl asserted that his company's efforts definitely have a cost-saving agenda, as hauling costs for a 30-yard dumpster of trash have risen to around $280 per load from $50 only three years ago.

He conceded, though, that neither the chopper nor the crusher is profitable. But his company's environmentalism works as an internal "disci-

(Continued on page 18)

Escalating hauling and dumping costs have prompted dealers to develop conservation and recycling programs at their stores and headquarters.